

Fact Sheet

May 25, 2004

A BETTER PREPARED AMERICA: A YEAR IN REVIEW

Preparedness is the responsibility of every American. At the Department of Homeland Security, we are hard at work creating and implementing preparedness plans; developing procedures and policies that will guide our actions in the event of a terrorist attack; conducting training and exercises to ensure that our first responders possess a necessary level of preparedness; enhancing partnerships with state and local governments, private sector institutions and other organizations; and funding the purchase of much-needed equipment for first responders, states, cities, and towns. These activities, along with an active American community, contribute to a level of national preparedness that is critical to achieving our goal of a better prepared America.

Progress Made in Interoperability:

The Department of Homeland Security is launching a new office for interoperability and compatibility that will coordinate communications interoperability, equipment and training compatibility between federal, state, and local governments. By coordinating and leveraging the vast efforts spread across the federal government, this office will reduce unnecessary duplication in programs and spending, and identify and promote best practices. Homeland Security recently released a technical Statement of Requirements document for future communications interoperability (posted at www.SafecomProgram.gov) which is already prompting private sector response, with over 5,000 copies downloaded from the web site and industry already proposing solutions compatible with those requirements. And Homeland Security has also issued new standards for major pieces of first responder equipment, including personal air filtration protection, personal protective clothing for personnel working in contaminated areas, and basic protective clothing for law enforcement for incidents involving possible chemical, biological, or radiological incidents.

In addition to addressing the long-term solution to the problems of interoperability and compatibility, Homeland Security has already identified technical specifications for a short-term, baseline interoperable communications capability that will allow first responders to interact by voice with each other, regardless of frequency or mode. When adopted at the state and local level, these specifications will enable most first responders to have some form of communication with each other at the scene of a crisis. As the first initiative of this new office, Homeland Security will be demonstrating the effectiveness

of this approach by working with the state and local leadership of ten cities this year, including New York, NY; Chicago, IL; National Capitol Region, DC; Los Angeles, CA; San Francisco, CA; Philadelphia, PA; Houston, TX; Jersey City, NJ; Miami, FL; and Boston, MA. The interoperability achieved in these cities will serve as a replicable model for communications that can be deployed throughout the entire country.

These immediate steps lay the foundation within Homeland Security for longer-term nationwide efforts managed at the federal, state and local level to create an integrated system of regional communications that allows public safety personnel to communicate with each other in any mode. This office, based with the Science and Technology directorate, will also research and test existing and emerging technologies for improved public safety communications and interoperability. The office will build on the communications focus of the current SAFECOM program, which will continue as a part of the new office. The new office will expand the focus on interoperability into the areas of equipment, training, critical infrastructure protection, and response and recovery.

Planning for a Better Prepared America:

National Response Plan (NRP): The NRP is designed to reflect the policy established in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, and Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 5 to create a single comprehensive approach to domestic incident management. In HSPD-5, the President directed the development of a NRP to integrate federal domestic prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery plans into one all-discipline, all-hazards plan. The NRP, currently undergoing final review by stakeholders, provides clear expectations for federal support to state and local authorities, implementation of federal incident management authorities and responsibilities under the law, and coordination of resources among federal departments and agencies.

National Incident Management System (NIMS): Homeland Security led the federal, state, local, and tribal development and completion of the new NIMS, based in large part on the incident command system taught by Homeland Security's U.S. Fire Administration and long-tested by first responders throughout the country. NIMS is significant because it ensures that all of our nation's first responders are working under the same plan, using the same nomenclature, and are receiving consistent training. NIMS embraces the Incident Command System (ICS) and establishes a response structure that is scalable to meet the needs and complexity of a disaster event. In addition, Homeland Security has established a new organization, the NIMS Integration Center (NIC), to ensure successful inter-agency coordination and implementation of the NIMS.

Catastrophic Planning: Homeland Security is leading federal efforts to develop a Catastrophic Incident Response strategy. This strategy, which will be a component of the National Response Plan, establishes a coordinated plan for accelerating delivery of the many resources and capabilities state and local authorities may need in the case of a catastrophic incident with large numbers of casualties.

Sharing Information More Efficiently:

Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN): The HSIN provides for real-time information to be shared between state and local agencies and our Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC). Each state and major urban area's Homeland Security Advisor or other designated points of contact will receive software licenses, technology, and training to provide better efficiency, flow of information and reduced vulnerabilities between federal and state homeland security professionals.

Developing and Executing Programs to Increase Preparedness:

National Exercise Program: Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 8 outlines actions to strengthen and measure homeland security capabilities. The National Exercise Program has been identified as a priority initiative under HSPD-8 and initiated by the Department. The National Exercise Program establishes the framework for exercise scheduling, design and evaluation for the exercises that are designed to test the response capabilities of the federal government and its state, local and tribal partners. Efforts are made to include international and/or private-sector participation. The cornerstone of the national performance-based exercise program is the Top Officials (TOPOFF) National Exercise Series, a biennial program that includes a functional exercise in year one and a full-scale exercise in year two, with continuity provided by a series of seminars.

Transit and Rail Inspection Pilot Program (TRIP): Homeland Security launched a test program in May 2004, to measure the feasibility of explosives screening for people and bags traveling on U.S. trains.

National Emergency Management Baseline Capability Assessment Program (NEMB-CAP): Under this program, Homeland Security is striving to complete evaluations of 56 state and state-level emergency management programs by the end of 2005. The NEMB-CAP involves a multi-year effort to assess, analyze, evaluate, and collectively frame state emergency management capabilities against a common national set of criteria.

Setting Performance Standards for Response Equipment: Homeland Security adopted its first standards regarding personal protective equipment developed to protect first responders against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents. These standards, which will assist state and local procurement officials and manufacturers, are intended to provide emergency personnel with the best available protective gear.

Funding Preparedness and Streamlining Grant System:

Interoperability: Homeland Security awarded \$79 million for communication interoperability pilot projects in 17 communities. The grants were awarded on a competitive basis in FY 2003. Results from these projects will be featured as best practices, and serve as models for other communities who are working to resolve this critical problem.

Streamlined Grant Processes: In order to reduce the time and effort spent by first responders and state and local governments, we streamlined our grant process by eliminating multiple applications and consolidating various administrative procedures into a single process. This greatly reduces the time in which funding can be made available. In FY 2004, five distinct programs, the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSP), the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Grant Program (LETPP), the Citizen Corps Grant Program (CCP), the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), and the Mass Transit Security Program, were integrated into two consolidated grant programs.

Grants Distributed:

- * Since its creation, Homeland Security has provided states and localities with over \$8.2 billion in State Homeland Security Grants for the purchase of specialized equipment to enhance the capability of state and local agencies to prevent and respond to incidents of terrorism involving the use of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE) weapons; for the protection of critical infrastructure and prevention of terrorist incidents; for the development, conduct and evaluation of state CBRNE exercises and training programs; and for costs associated with updating and implementing each states' Homeland Security Strategy.
- * The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) has provided a total of \$1.4 billion to address the unique equipment, training, planning and exercise needs of large, high-threat urban areas, and to assist them in building an enhanced and sustainable capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from threats or acts of terrorism.
- * Port security grants have funded risk assessments, command facilities and other projects that will help local officials foil terrorism, as well as contribute to laying the foundation for ports to continually make improvements and to employ new security technologies. In three rounds of port security grants, \$441 million has been distributed.
- * The Department disbursed \$180 million in Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) in FY 2004 to enable state and local governments to hire personnel and focus on an all-hazard approach to emergency management: preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. This was a 9% increase over FY 2003 and a 54% increase over historic levels (FY 2002 and earlier).
- By the end of FY 2004, \$2 billion will have been distributed to more than 20,000 local fire departments through the Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant program. In FY 2004, \$750 million will be awarded to thousands of fire departments across America to meet their preparedness needs.

Training for Tomorrow's Challenges:

First Responder Training: Through our first responders training program, we have trained over 128,000 emergency responders in courses ranging from awareness and prevention to chemical HAZMAT techniques (473,000 from more than 5,000

jurisdictions since 1998). Through our partnership with Texas A&M University, our Blended Learning Strategy was expedited to reach more emergency responders faster. Enrollment in FEMA's Independent Study Program, a web-based training and distance learning courses for the nation's emergency managers and first responders, has increased to 187,520 in FY 2003, a 125% increase over 2001. Homeland Security trained a record number of leaders from volunteer fire departments.

Noble Training Center: In 2003, Homeland Security began offering courses at the Noble Training Center in Alabama. The center, a former Army hospital turned into a training center, moved from HHS to Homeland Security with the creation of the Department. Training focuses on preparedness for mass casualty events.

Strengthening America's Readiness and Assets:

Strategic Communications Resources Effort (SECURE) Project: Over the last year, Homeland Security has installed secure videoconference capabilities, and secure phones and fax in the emergency operations centers of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, each state governor's office received a secure phone that allows states to transmit and receive classified information. In addition, the Department awarded \$81 million in Emergency Operations Center (EOC) grants to those states that best demonstrated the need for the funding to reduce vulnerabilities and risk.

National Urban Search and Rescue System (USAR): Homeland Security possesses 28 USAR task forces who have acquired the training and equipment necessary to perform search and rescue in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) events.

National Disaster Medical System (NDMS): These teams of medical professionals are assets within Homeland Security that can be activated and pre-positioned during a disaster, thus ensuring faster response time and closer cooperation between these specialized teams and other teams providing direct aid to disaster victims.

Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST): Thirteen specialized units, called MMSTs, will be in place by September 30, 2004, to provide a rapid, deployable force to meet the nation's most serious port security threats. MSSTs provide a robust mix of maritime interdiction, law enforcement, and anti-terrorism expertise focusing on threats to critical waterfront facilities, high interest vessels, cruise ships, high value military units and major marine events.

BioWatch: Homeland Security has improved the nation's protection against bioterrorism by deploying an environmental sensor system to major cities across the nation. This sensor system is operated as a joint program with the Centers for Disease Control and the Environmental Protection Agency, in conjunction with the FBI. The program, which has been successfully operating in more than 30 of the nation's urban centers since early 2003, helps to quickly detect trace amounts of airborne pathogens such as anthrax in time to take protective actions, such as distributing life-saving pharmaceuticals. Since its beginning, the system has performed over a million tests with no false positives and only

one true positive that was determined not be an act of terrorism, but came from an environmental source.

Detecting Nuclear Materials: Homeland Security is developing technologies for detection and deterrence, and incidence management, against radiological and nuclear threats. Activities include development of the capability for detecting the presence of nuclear materials in shipping containers and vehicles that might otherwise evade detection by conventional sensors. This new capability will enable the Department to probe questionable objects inside containers with a beam of radiation, which will positively identify materials of concern.

Countermeasures Test Bed: Homeland Security has established a field test bed in the New York/New Jersey region for evaluating new and existing security-related countermeasures in urban transportation venues, thereby facilitating their rapid transition to federal, state and local operational end-users. Homeland Security has established field test sites in seaports, airports, highways, and rail facilities. In these sites, new countermeasure technology is tested for its effectiveness in the hands of front-line law enforcement personnel and other first responders.

Involving Communities in the Preparedness Effort:

Ready Campaign: In February 2003, Homeland Security launched the *Ready* (www.Ready.gov) Campaign, a national public service advertising campaign designed to educate and empower American citizens to prepare for and respond to potential terrorist attacks and other emergencies. In December 2003, Homeland Security launched the *Listo* (www.Listo.gov) Campaign, the Spanish-language version of Homeland Security's *Ready* Campaign. Extensions of the campaign, *Ready for Business* and *Ready for Kids*, will be launched by the end of the year.

Citizen Corps: Citizen Corps, which is a component of USA Freedom Corps, creates opportunities for individuals to volunteer to help their communities prepare for and respond to emergencies by bringing together local leaders, citizen volunteers and a network of first responder organizations. Their goal is to have all citizens participate in making their communities safer, stronger, and better prepared for preventing and handling threats of terrorism, crime, and disasters of all kinds.

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